

## Message Text

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43

ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 ACDA-19 IO-14 NEA-10 AID-20 PC-15 SNM-02

OPR-02 A-01 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 CU-04 DRC-01

OC-06 CCO-00 SY-10 /239 W  
----- 002365

P R 141241Z DEC 73

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9026

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY RANGOON

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA

DEA HQS

CINCPAC

USSAG NKP

13TH ADVON UDORN

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 BANGKOK 19397

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: READINGS OF THE BANGKOK POLITICAL BAROMETER THROUGH

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DECEMBER 14

REF: BANGKOK 19030

SUMMARY: CONTINUED LABOR UNREST SPARKED ANOTHER TELEVISED COMMENT FROM PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL CRACK DOWN

IF THE STRIKES DO NOT STOP. THE KING AGAIN ENTERED THE POLITICAL ARENA WITH HIS SUDDEN ANNOUNCEMENT DECEMBER 10 THAT HE HAD APPOINTED A 2346 MAN NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY (NGA) WHICH HE CHARGED WITH SELECTING FROM ITSELF PERSONS TO FILL VACANCIES IN THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA). THE FOREIGN MINISTRY VERSION OF THE POLITICS OF OIL HAS SENT THE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER TO THE MIDDLE EAST, WITH A SIMILAR TRIP IN SEARCH OF OIL PLANNED FOR CHINA. ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KRIT SIVARA GAVE AN EXTEMPORANEOUS AND CONCILIATORY PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HE DEMONSTRATED HIS SUPPORT FOR THE SANYA GOVERNMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. STRIKE INTOXICATION CONTINUES TO AFFECT VARIOUS SECTORS OF THE BANGKOK ECONOMY. TAILORS AND THAI AIRWAYS CREWS HAVE JOINED THE CROWD. WORKERS AT THE AMERICAN PX SYSTEM HAVE RECENTLY ENTERED THE RANKS. PRIME MINISTER SANYA THAMMASAK, HIS INDUSTRY AND COMMUNICATIONS MINISTERS AND THE LABOR DEPARTMENT DIRECTOR GENERAL APPEARED ON NATIONAL TELEVISION AND DEVOTED MOST OF THEIR TIME TO THE LABOR SITUATION. ALTHOUGH THE PARTICIPANTS DID NOT REVEAL NEW MEASURES FOR DEALING WITH THE SITUATION, THE PRIME MINISTER MADE A STRONG APPEAL THAT ALL SIDES RESORT TO COMPROMISE. HE AGAIN EMPHASIZED THAT THE GOVERNMENT MIGHT USE FORCE TO END THE PERSISTING STRIKES.

2. IN AN UNEXPECTED CONSTITUTION DAY ANNOUNCEMENT, THE KING AGAIN STEPPED INTO THE POLITICAL ARENA AND NOMINATED A 2346 MEMBER NATIONAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY (NGA). HE CHARGED THIS GROUP WITH SELECTING FROM ITSELF REPLACEMENTS FOR THE VACANCIES IN THE NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY (NLA). THE DECEMBER 10 MOVE HAS VIRTUALLY ASSURED THAT ALL MEMBERS OF THE NLA WILL INDIVIDUALLY TENDER THEIR RESIGNATIONS AND THUS RESOLVED AND IMPASSE THAT HAS BEEN BUILDING FOR SOMETIME OVER PUBLIC MISGIVINGS ABOUT ALLOWING THE THANOM GOVERNMENT APPOINTED NLA APPROVE THE NEW CONSTITUTION. THE KING'S LIST IS AN ECLECTIC GROUP OF THAI FROM MANY OCCUPATIONS, INCLUDING CIVILIAN AND MILITARY OFFICIALS. THE LARGE NGA IS THUS MORE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE GENERAL POPULATION AND ITS SELECTION OF THE NLA  
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WHICH MUST RATIFY THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION CAN BE EXPECTED TO HELP FOCUS PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR THE EMERGING POLITICAL SYSTEM (SEPTTEL).

3. THE STALWART DEMOCRATIC PARTY IS TRYING TO REVITALIZE ITS ORGANIZATION FOR THE APPROACHING ELECTIONS. A RECEPTION OF FORMER MEMBERS HELD AT THE HOME OF MR. LEKHA APHAIWONGSE, THE WIFE OF A FORMER PARTY LEADER AND PRIME MINISTER, DISCLOSED A SPLIT IN PARTY LEADERSHIP, SINCE FORMER LEADER SENI PRAMOTE APPARENTLY

WAS NOT INVITED. MORE OVERT POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATION AWAITS  
THE ENACTMENT OF A POLITICAL PARTIES LAW, SINCE PARTIES ARE STILL  
TECHNICALLY ILLEGAL.

4. DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER CHARTCHAI CHUNHAWAN LEFT THIS WEEK FOR  
THE MIDDLE EAST SEEKING PETROLEUM SUPPLIES. AGAIN THE FOREIGN  
MINISTRY TRIED TO SMOOTH THE WAY WITH A STATEMENT DEMANDING  
THAT ISRAEL IMMEDIATELY RETURN THE SINAI DESERT AND OTHER  
OCCUPIED LANDS SEIZED IN 1967 TO THE ARABS (BANGKOK 19059).  
PRESS RUMORS THAT THE PRC MIGHT BE WILLING TO SUPPLY OIL TO THAI-  
LAND UNDERLINED THE ROLE OF OIL IN THAILAND'S FOREIGN POLICY.  
THE FOREIGN MINISTRY HAS ANNOUNCED THAT CHARTCHAI PLANS TO MAKE  
A TRIP TO PEKING SOON ALTHOUGH THE DATE HAS NOT BEEN SET (SEPTEL).

5. THE PUBLPOMAND RESPONSIVE NATURE OF THE SANYA GOVERNMENT WAS  
RECENTLY DEMONSTRATED WHEN THE CONSTITUTIONAL DRAFTING COMMITTEE  
(CDC) REVERSED A MAJOR DECISION AFTER TWO WEEKS OF PUBLIC DEBATE  
AND PRIVATE DELIBERATION (PARA 6 REFTTEL). STICKING TO ITS INTENTION  
TO STRENGTHEN POLITICAL PARTIES, THE COMM  
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OC-06 CCO-00 SY-10 /239 W  
----- 002083

P R 141241Z DEC 73  
FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9027  
INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA  
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 BANGKOK 19397

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

6. THE GOVERNMENT'S PROMISE TO INCREASE THE WAGES OF ITS  
600,000 EMPLOYEES AT A COST OF NEARLY ONE BILLION BAHT HAS LED THE  
CABINET TO APPROVE OF FURTHER TAX INCREASES ON PRACTICALLY ALL  
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LUXURY ITEMS, CAR REGISTRATION FEES, GASOLINE PRODUCTS AND LAND  
TRANSFERS. FURTHERMORE, THE CABINET SAID THAT GOVERNMENT SALARIES  
WILL BE TAXED FOR THE FIRST TIME. THE FINANCE MINISTRY, HOWEVER,  
HAS ALREADY REDUCED THE TAX BITE FOR THE LOWER INCOME GROUPS.

7. ARMY COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF GENERAL KRIT SIVARA GAVE AN EXTEMPOR-  
ANEOUS PRESS CONFERENCE DECEMBER 8 IN WHICH, IF ACCURATELY  
REPORTED, HE EXPRESSED A NUMBER OF INTERESTING IDEAS. HE REPORTEDLY  
ADVOCATED A SYSTEM OF "MILD SOCIALISM" FOR THAILAND. HE SAID HE  
AGREED WITH DR. PUEY UNGPHAKORN'S SUGGESTION THAT MILITARY UNITS  
BE MOVED OUT OF BANGKOK. WHILE ADMITTING THAT HE WAS DISTURBED AT  
LABOR UNREST, HE DISCOUNTED A MILITARY COUP IN THE NEAR FUTURE.  
KRIT EXPRESSED CONCERN AT THE POSSIBILITY THAT STUDENTS MIGHT  
FORM A POLITICAL PARTY. KRIT HAS EXPRESSED HIMSELF TO US IN A  
BASICALLY MORE CONSERVATIVE VEIN THAN THIS RECENT PRESS CONVER-  
ENCE REVEALS.

8. THE GOVERNMENT'S COUNTERINSURGENCY PROGRAM  
MAY COME IN FOR CRITICISM IN THE NEAR FUTURE. NEWS REPORTS FROM  
LOEI PROVINCE SAY THAT VILLAGE DEFENSE UNITS HAVE REFUSED TO GO  
OUT ON OPERATIONS IN PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED VERBAL ABUSES FROM  
THE GOVERNOR. COMMUNIST EXPANSION EFFORTS HAVE MAULLED THESE  
UNITS AND MADE THEM UNDERSTANDABLY RELUCTANT TO EXPOSE THEM-  
SELVES. IN RESPONSE TO THE DEFICIENCIES IN THE ORGANIZATION OF  
THE COUNTERING AGENCY PROGRAM, LT. GEN.  
SAIYUD KERDPHOL, ARMY DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, RECENTLY OUTLINED TO  
US REFORMS HE IS PUSHING (BANGKOK 19052). SLOW PROGRESS MAY OPEN  
THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ARMY FOR STRONG CRITICISM, PARTICULARLY  
ONCE ELECTIONEERING IS UNDERSAY.  
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## Message Attributes

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